DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 215 029 UD 022 177

TITLE Substance Abuse Education Syllabus, Grades 6-7-8.
INSTITUTION Detroit Public Schools, Mich. Dept. of Curriculum Development Services.
PUB DATE 79
NOTE 24p.; For a related document, see UD 022 176.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adolescents; *Drug Abuse; *Drug Education; Information Sources; Instructional Materials; Junior High Schools

ABSTRACT

This syllabus on substance abuse education is intended as a resource for sixth, seventh and eighth grade teachers, and focuses on concepts pertaining to the proper use of drugs, prevention of drug-related problems, and recommended health practices. Content areas and instructional activities are outlined for each of four concepts: (1) behavior patterns influence present and future health; (2) problems are common to all people, but one's response to problems is important to personality development; (3) the legitimate use of drugs and other substances is widespread; and (4) drugs can be valuable when used properly, but improper use of drugs constitutes abuse. The guide emphasizes improved communications between adults and children, decision making experiences, values clarification and the development of a positive self-concept and attitude toward life. A list of published, audiovisual and organizational resources is appended. (JCD)

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Detroit Public Schools
Department of Curriculum Development and Services
Health, Physical Education and Safety

SUBSTANCE ABUSE EDUCATION
SYLLABUS
GRADES 6-7-8

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INTRODUCTION

A drug is any substance other than food that can change the structure or functions of the body. Drugs are very useful when used properly.

Our society is drug-oriented. We have been using, misusing and abusing drugs by taking medication for every minor discomfort. Our youth see this and they also notice parental and adult consumption of alcohol and use of tobacco. However, young people are convinced that their choice of drugs is better than that of their elders.

Education about drugs, if carefully planned and effectively presented, can become a major force in the prevention of drug abuse.

At this level, we must deal with the turbulent stages of adolescence. The strong influence of peers upon youth and the realization that behavior influences future health should be considered. Youth should be able to have opportunity to verbalize, without condemnation, their feelings on various subjects including drugs, and exchange freely their opinions and ideas with classmates.

Studies have shown that the development of a well-adjusted personality is basic to the prevention of drug abuse. It has also been found that unhappy, lonely individuals looking for friendship and companionship, kids who fear competition, those who are usually unsuccessful in meeting teenage challenges, both socially and educationally, are vulnerable to drug use. We must emphasize an understanding of self and the development of good mental health, providing opportunity for personal growth and development of self-concepts.

This guide stresses improved communications between adults and children, decision-making experiences, values clarification and works toward helping young people gain respect for themselves and others as they develop a positive attitude towards life.

SOME BASIC PREMISES

This syllabus on substance abuse education is intended as a resource for teachers in the sixth, seventh and eighth grades. It contains information and references to assist in providing appropriate learning experiences for children in this crucial area.

Many different areas of information are provided. However, it is not intended that all activities be utilized. The teacher, understanding the needs of his/her pupils, should feel free to choose the subject matter and materials which meet a particular situation.

The teacher's role is one of prevention, to familiarize pupils, making them aware of this subject area to build a base in human values. In teaching about substances and substance abuse, we must avoid lecturing and moralizing, and should not use fear and scare tactics.

The concepts are not only about drugs and substances but about people, building proper attitudes, teaching decision-making, working from the concepts and developing an appreciation of the human body.

The major purpose of this approach is to teach young people how to live in this society which is so drug oriented, so they will be able to grow up to be happy, healthy and less vulnerable.

Substance Use and Abuse

Grades 6-7-8

OBJECTIVES

1. To create an awareness of the total drug problem--prevention, education, treatment, rehabilitation and law enforcement on the local, state and federal levels.

2. To develop the ability to make intelligent choices of attitude or action based on facts, and to develop the courage to stand by one's own convictions.

3. To understand the personal, social and economic problems contributing to the misuse of drugs.

4. To know that drugs come from several sources; to understand their long history of use and misuse.

5. To understand the difference between prescription and non-prescription medicines.

6. To know that many widely-used substances contain drugs.

7. To know that misused and abused medicines, drugs and other agents may have serious effects on the individual.

8. To identify common household products and their use or misuse.

9. To understand and appreciate the relationship of drugs to total health.

10. To know that our body systems are interdependent and interrelated. Each system is made up of organs composed of tissues which, in turn, are made up of cells.

11. To identify the potential dangers of tobacco as related to lung, oral and respiratory problems (explain why tobacco is a serious risk to health).

12. To understand what alcohol is; how it is used commercially and how it is abused; how it reacts in the body; and how it affects health and society.

13. To understand the proper and improper uses of drugs, the effects these drugs have on the nervous system, and the ultimate effect on one's personal health and society.

14. To recognize that alcohol is used by some people for dietary, ceremonial and social reasons; by others, because of the drug-like effects; and by some not at all.

15. To illustrate how certain drugs may have beneficial effects in some circumstances and harmful effects in others.

CONCEPT I: BEHAVIOR PATTERNS INFLUENCE PRESENT AND FUTURE HEALTH

A. Content and understandings

1. Basic behavior patterns have significant effects on total health

   a. Good eating habits, adequate sleep, rest and exercise
   b. Proper habits of personal hygiene
   c. Acceptance of physical limitations and own growth patterns
   d. Making the most of your mental capabilities through educational opportunities and individual initiative
   e. Cultivating positive feelings, i.e., love, joy, friendship
   f. Constructive relationships at home with brothers, sisters and parents
   g. Constructive relationships outside the home, at school, during leisure activities
   h. Wholesome boy-girl relationships should be developed

B. Suggested learning experiences and activities

1. Have students fill out a personality questionnaire.

2. Describe activities of people who are successful in spite of severe physical handicaps.

3. Discuss how physical activities and physical appearance can affect your mental attitude.

4. Have students discuss early-formed habits that often become lifelong, i.e., neatness, punctuality, etc.

5. Discuss the necessity of assuming responsibility for personal behavior.

6. Identify habits that affect physical, mental and emotional health.

7. Discuss with pupils the significance of attitudes and how they can change behavior, influence health and affect others.

8. Identify reasons why people like or dislike others,

9. Have students evaluate the impact of peer acceptance upon behavior choice.

CONCEPT II: PROBLEMS ARE COMMON TO ALL PEOPLE. HOW WE RESPOND TO THESE PROBLEMS IS IMPORTANT TO PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT.

A. Content and understandings

1. Some causes of teenage problems

   a. Conflicts with self, friends and parents
   b. Unsatisfied needs
   c. Unrealistic expectations
   d. Poor health
   e. Emotional/social difficulties

2. Poor responses to problem-solving

   a. Avoidance of facing problems, blaming others, making excuses, using sickness as an excuse
   b. Withdrawal, day-dreaming
   c. Aggressive behavior--fighting, bragging, bullying, arguing
   d. Rebellion and hostility

3. Positive responses, indication of growth

   a. Identify real problem immediately
   b. Consideration of alternatives
   c. Act by using the plan that seems to work best
   d. Learn to live with the solution even though it may not work as you prefer

B. Suggested learning experiences and activities

1. List some of the causes of problems that may arise between parents and children.

2. List problems and categorize them to determine the most common ones.

3. What problems might students have in the following situations:

   a. One-parent family
   b. Sickness in home
   c. Foster parents
   d. Divorced parents
   e. Sibling rivalry

4. List various ways in which people try to escape problems.

5. Ask pupil to write what he wishes to accomplish in life and identify his strengths and weaknesses in achieving his goals.

6. Study the role of the arts in personality development.

7. Develop reasons why adolescents would rather seek advice from friends and members of their peer groups than their parents.

8. Ask students to write on a card or a piece of paper four words ending in (able) which tell something about who they are, i.e., lovable, reasonable, touchable, improbable.

9. Have pupils write something of which they are proud that they can do on their own.

10. Have pupils write something of which they are proud in relation to their families.

CONCEPT III: THE LEGITIMATE USE OF DRUGS AND OTHER SUBSTANCES IS WIDESPREAD.

A. Content and understandings

1. There are many commonly-overused substances

a. Nicotine (tobacco)

(1) Statistics on annual national consumption of cigarettes
(2) Cost of cigarettes
(3) Health hazards of smoking
(4) Smoking and the athlete
(5) Advertising of tobacco by industry

b. Alcohol

(1) Statistics on annual national consumption
(2) Cost of alcohol
(3) Predictable effects on the human body and health hazards
(4) Social acceptance, individual choice
(5) Increasing number of alcoholics
(6) Major contributing factor in fatal automobile accidents
(7) Relationship to crime

c. Prescription medicines

(1) Medicines prescribed by a doctor for preventing, treatment and cure of illness and disease

d. Non-prescription medicines

(1) Products available without prescription to relieve pain or treat temporary or minor health problems

e. Other substances that are beneficial when used according to directions

(1) Glue
(2) Gasoline
(3) Aerosols

B. Suggested learning experiences and activities

1. Discuss why people smoke and how they began.

2. Include in a class discussion the economics of the tobacco industry vs. the cost of smoking to the individual.

3. Draw a diagram of the respiratory system. List parts of the body that may be harmed by smoking.

4. Discuss how and why smoking in bed is dangerous.

5. Bring in a variety of tobacco advertisements and have pupils study them for accuracy of their appeal.

6. Pass smoke through filter paper and note the tar residue on the paper. Compare relative amounts of residue filter-tip and regular cigarettes.

7. Have students research the two methods of how alcoholic beverages are made--fermentation and distillation.

8. Evaluate alcohol as a food.

9. Discuss reasons why young people start to drink alcoholic beverages, such as peer influence, curiosity, examples of adults, etc.

10. Discuss the effects of alcohol on the body, including influences on the circulatory, respiratory, digestive and nervous systems.

11. Discuss some of the problems caused by alcohol, such as intoxication; potential alcoholism; expense; absenteeism from work; associated illnesses; accidents and crime; family problems.

12. Invite a pharmacist to discuss prescription and non-prescription drugs with the class.

13. List from medicine cabinet a number of non-prescription medicines.

14. Emphasize the importance of using non-prescription drugs only under the supervision of parents, nurse, physician, etc.

15. Discuss warning label on a harmful substance and teach its meaning.

16. Discuss prescription drugs as to kind and legal restrictions.

17. Discuss difference between use and misuse of products.

CONCEPT IV: MANY DRUGS ARE VALUABLE WHEN USED PROPERLY. WHEN USED IMPROPERLY, THEY BECOME SUBJECT TO ABUSE.

A. Content and understandings

1. The past 25 years have seen the development and use of many new drugs.

2. Drugs have played an important part in the spectacular reduction of mortality in recent years.

3. Drugs have many effects including "side effects," on people.

4. The illegal or excessive use of drugs is called drug abuse and is of great concern today.

5. The drugs abused today fall into several categories.

B. Suggested learning experiences and activities

1. Discuss the decrease in incidence of disease and the development of new drugs such as antibiotics, sulfa drugs, diuretics, tranquilizers.

2. Study the various uses of drugs such as headache remedies, pain killers, sleeping pills, pep pills, diet aids and laxatives.

3. Discuss the work of the Federal Food and Drug Administration in protecting the public against harmful drugs.

4. Consider television as a means of promoting "over-the-counter" drug sales.

5. Discuss drug dependence. Relate the expense of drug dependence to crime.

6. Define stimulants (amphetamines) and discuss the effects of pep pills, "bennies," and "speed;" medical uses, possible dangers.

7. Define depressants (barbiturates) and discuss the effects of sleeping pills, "goof balls;" medical uses and possible dangers.

8. Discuss pot, tea, grass, weed (marijuana); its medical use, possible dangers, legal aspects.

9. Define volatile chemicals (freon, airplane glue, paint thinner, lighter fluid, etc.); discuss medical use, possible dangers if abused.

10. Define LSD, PCP (hallucinogens); medical uses, possible dangers if abused.

11. Define opiates (codeine, morphine, heroin, paregoric); medical uses and possible dangers if abused.

RESOURCES

Textbooks

Health and Growth, Scott Foresman - Book 6
Health and Growth, Scott Foresman - Book 7
Health and Growth, Scott Foresman - Book 8

You and Your Health, Scott Foresman - Book 6
You and Your Health, Scott Foresman - Book 7
You and Your Health, Scott Foresman - Book 8

Books

Drugs, Facts on Their Use and Abuse, Houser Scott Foresman and Company, Illinois, 1969, $.93 per copy

Values and Teaching, Rath, Harmin, Simon, Merrill Publishing, 1300 Alum Creek Drive, Columbus, Ohio, 43216. $3.95

Values Clarification, A Process to Aid and Abet Intelligent Decision Making, Handbook, Wayne County Intermediate School District, Project DARTE, 1610 Kales Building, Detroit, Michigan 48226

Drug Use and Abuse for Michigan Schools, 1970, Michigan Department of Education, pp. 41-48 and pp. 89-95, Reference federal, state and local laws

Legal Aspects of School Administration, 6-101 Admn., Detroit Public Schools Publication, File No. 9313. Copies are available in every school office.

Teaching About Drugs, A Curriculum Guide, K-12 American School Health Association, Kent, Ohio, 44240, Second Edition, $4.00

Drug Abuse, A Source Book and Guide for Teachers, California State Department of Education

Drug Abuse: Escape to Nowhere, A Guide for Educators, Smith, Kline and French Laboratories

Health Instruction, Suggestions for Teachers, American School Health Association, Kent, Ohio 44240

Clarifying Values Through Subject Matter, Harmin, Kirschenbaum and Simon, Winston Press, 25 Groveland Terrace, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55403

Prevention in Perspective, Schaps, Cohen, Resnik, Prevention Materials Institute Press, Lafayette, California

Eleven Strategies, Schaps, Slimmon, Prevention Materials Institue Press, Lafayette, California

Pamphlets

LSD--Some Questions and Answers
Marijuana--Some Questions and Answers
Narcotics--Some Questions and Answers
The Ups and Downs--Some Questions and Answers

All available from NARCO, 76 W. Adams, Kales Building, Detroit, Michigan 48226

Booklets

What Is the Law for Juveniles?
Detroit News Publication

Drug Abuse: The Chemical Cop-out
Blue Cross Blue Shield

Kids and Alcohol, Facts and Ideas About Drinking and Not Drinking
National Council on Alcoholism, Inc.
735 Third Avenue, New York, New York 10017

Films

Drug Facts Everyone Needs To Know	New Detroit
Drugs in the Nervous System	S9532
Smoking and Health, A Report to Youth	S1158
Speedscene	S9819
Families	S4886
Noises in the Night	S192
A Day in the Death of Donny B	S9896
Everyday Courage and Common Sense	S300

Hooked	S1423
Making It	S1708
Understanding Others	S8194

Filmstrips

The Choice Is Yours	F3995
Choosing	F1828
Feelings About Others	F1829
Giving and Taking Advice	F1830
I Never Looked At It That Way Before	F4257
Leading and Following	F1831
The Tuned-Out Generation	F4112
Values for Teenagers	F3995
Why We Do Things	F1832
Alcohol and Your Health	F3701
Let's Talk About Drugs	F224
LSD: The Acid World	F4495
Marijuana, What Can You Believe?	F593
Tobacco, Historic Background	F3736
Drug Misuse and Your Health	F3702

Visuals

Drugs and Their AbuseChart, NARCO

Dial-A-Drug reference wheel, Spanco Corporation, 1969, Distributed to all Detroit Public Schools, Secondary School Libraries

Drugs of Abuse Chart, Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs, 611 Federal Building, Detroit, Michigan 48226

Agencies

DARTE (Drug Abuse Reduction Through Education), Wayne County Intermediate School District, 33500 Van Born Road, Wayne, Michigan 48184

Wayne County Office of Substance Abuse Services, 500 Kales Building, 76 W. Adams, Detroit, Michigan 48226

Poison Control Center, Children's Hospital of Michigan, 3801 Beaubien, Detroit, Michigan 48201

Cunningham Committee Against Drug Abuse, 1927 Twelfth Street, Detroit, Michigan 48216

Detroit Health Department, NSD Drug Treatment Center, 5031 Grandy, Detroit, Michigan 48221

National Council on Alcoholism-Greater Detroit Area, 1800 Kales Building, 76 W. Adams, Detroit, Michigan 48226

NARCO (Narcotics Addiction Rehabilitation Coordinating Organization), 1310 Kales Building, 76 W. Adams, Detroit, Michigan 48226

* Suggestions for Educators

Drug abuse is many things. It is the heroin user injecting his bag of H, the methedrine user high on "speed," the teenager smoking "pot," the 12-year-old sniffing model airplane glue. But it is also the adult starting his day with an amphetamine for a needed "pick-me-up" and ending it with several drinks to "unwind" and a barbiturate to put him to sleep.

The problem of drug abuse reaches deeply into our values, aspirations and fears. It is an emotionally-charged area for almost all of us. Drug abuse is a serious, growing problem here and in many other countries as well and teachers are increasingly being called upon to do something about it. They face the difficult task of deciding just what and how to teach about drugs.

Certainly no single article, pamphlet, book or film can enable teachers to be effective. There is much still to be learned about the problem of drug abuse and particularly about how to be more effective in discouraging it. Establishing an atmosphere conducive to good communication between teacher and students is of basic importance. This article contains some hints that have proven helpful in communicating with youngsters who are thinking about drugs or have already experimented with them. It is only a very elementary introduction to ways in which teachers can strengthen relationships of trust and understanding with students in this highly-charged area, and open up dialogue and discussion which is far more likely to influence young attitudes and behavior than the lectures and sermons that have all too often marked the crusade against drugs.

Some concrete suggestions:

Avoid panic. Teachers are in a particularly good position to encourage parents, students and the community to remain level-headed about drug use. Drug abuse, like other forms of behavior, may have varying causes. For some, it may represent ill-advised experimentation; for others it may indicate serious psychological problems. If a teacher has reason to believe that one of his students is experiencing serious emotional difficulties, consultation should be sought with the school counselor and a conference arranged with the parents with a view to obtaining professional help for the youngster.

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*This article was written by Dr. Robert C. Peterson, Ph.D., Chief, Center for Studies of Narcotics and Drug Abuse, National Institute of Mental Health, in cooperation with the staff of Today's Education. It is one of a series of publications planned by NIMH to help teachers deal more effectively with information on substance abuse.

Some types of behavior that may be associated with serious problems include loss of interest in school and social relationships with others, marked alteration in behavior, deterioration in physical and personal appearance and the development of problems in dealing with school and parents. Since the reasons for drug use vary widely, so must the approaches to individual students.

While the teacher can play a role in referring suspected problems to the proper authorities, a panic-expressed reaction either to the student or to a parent can serve only to alienate the student further and to confuse what should be straight forward, objective and professional action if the student needs help.

Keep lines of communication open. Encouraging an atmosphere in which the student feels free to confide in parents and teachers and to discuss his concerns is an important first step. Obviously, the size of present classes often makes personal contact difficult. At the same time, if the student realizes that his parents and teachers are making a genuine effort to understand his point of view, this realization is likely to help him in the process of growing up. Although it is sometimes difficult, it is important to avoid being moralistic and judgmental in talking about drugs and drug users.

Many adults, including teachers, feel uncomfortable and defensive about discussing drugs with teenagers. This is sometimes due to awareness of our own inconsistencies in the use of everyday substances like tobacco and alcohol. Nevertheless, there are good and convincing arguments against the use of drugs which can be stated in terms that are persuasive to youth. For example, some teenagers see the use of drugs as one way of developing heightened self-awareness or of enhancing their inner freedom. Pointing out the difficulty of achieving these goals if they become drug-dependent may help them realize the fallacy of this viewpoint. Similarly, if young people are to improve the society of which they are critical, they can only do so by remaining a part of it rather than by chemically "copping out."

Avoid scare techniques. Use of sensational accounts or scare techniques in trying to discourage drug experimentation is usually ineffective because the teenager's direct knowledge frequently contradicts them. Teenagers are demanding and are entitled to honest and accurate answers. Given the facts, youngsters often quickly respond. The apparent decline in LSD usage, for example, is believed to be related to the well-publicized reports of possible adverse psychological and potential biological hazards.

It is impossible to eliminate or legislate away all possible substances of abuse. The individual decides for himself whether to use or not to use drugs. To be effective, prevention ultimately must be based on each student's decision not to use drugs because they are incompatible with his personal goals. Emphasizing that no authority, whether school official or police officer, can make the ultimate decision for him may help the youngster clarify his personal responsibility. It may also help to reduce the adolescent tendency to view drug abuse as an act of rebellion.

Because the abuse of drugs frequently carries with it heavy legal penalties, it is important that youngsters be aware of the possible long-term results of their behavior. While this should not be the primary emphasis, the legal and social implications over a lifetime should be indicated as two of the essential factors to be taken into consideration in any decision to use or not use drugs. Some young people, feeling keenly that certain drug laws are unjust, advocate violating them. Thoughtful discussion of the implications of such violation and of whether the use of drugs is sufficiently important to them to justify such extreme measures may be helpful.

Avoid creating an atmosphere of distrust and suspicion. Like many parents, some teachers, anxious to discourage drug abuse, are likely to assume that any departure from the preferred styles and customs of the majority is indicative of drug abuse. Youngsters who have tried or are using drugs come in all sizes and shapes--with short as well as long hair--and conventional clothes as well as eccentric dress....so do those who don't use drugs.

By equating unconventional appearance with drug abuse, we may encourage the very behavior we're trying to avoid. At a minimum, the youngster is likely to feel that the conventional world is completely opposed to any originality or creativity that does not fit a common mold and that the price of acceptance is complete conformity. While his external appearance may conform to the norm, there is no assurance that drug abuse will not become his private mode of rebellion.

Since the problem of teenage drug abuse embraces a wider range of substances than those prohibited by law, even an attitude of active suspicion and continuous surveillance, were that possible, would not eliminate the problem. It would, however, almost certainly destroy the climate of trust and confidence essential to the intergenerational communication that is desirable in preventing abuse.

Avoid drug stereotypes. Many of us, when we think about the drug misuser, immediately think of some more or less vague stereotype of the "addict." Similarly, we often tend to think of all the misused drugs as being generally alike. Nothing could be further from the truth. Present evidence suggests that the vast majority of youngsters who experiment with marijuana, the most popular illegal drug of abuse, do so on a one-time, experimental basis.

Drugs differ widely in their chemical composition and, more importantly, perhaps, in their effects, depending upon the personality of the user and the circumstances of use. The person who misuses drugs may vary from the one-time user experimenting out of curiosity to the chronic, heavy user who is psychologically dependent on a drug. While some types of drug misuse may be fairly apparent even to the untrained observer, other types may be so subtle as to escape the detection of even the expert.

Although some drug users go on to the use of more potent types of drugs, many others do not. Just why some users become dependent on particular drugs and others do not is not very clearly understood. It may be related to personality development but physiological factors may also play a role. While a physical dependency on the drug plays some role, psychological dependence appears to be more important. Physical dependence on heroin, for example, can be cured in a relatively short time; yet the heroin addict has a very difficult time avoiding using the drug again upon discharge from treatment.

Be well informed yourself about drugs. Much information is available about the drug problem, some of it accurate and useful. But unfortunately, much of what is published tends to be overdramatized and frequently inaccurate.

Much of the controversy over the effects of marijuana and its control, for example, results from overinterpretation or misinterpretation of what little data are presently available. Drug use advocates frequently use the scarcity of scientifically reliable information as a basis for arguing that marijuana and other drugs are harmless. The absence of complete agreement based on reliable evidence that a substance is harmful does not, of course, demonstrate its harmlessness. Often, relatively long-term use of a substance is required before its public health implications are apparent. Cigarette smoking provides an obvious and apt example. While American experience with marijuana is of relatively short duration, foreign research studies, though often difficult to interpret, suggest that long-term use of marijuana may be detrimental to the health of the users.

A discussion of the implications of various social policies regarding marijuana and public health is one approach that may enable you to reach your students. The social problems of adding another intoxicant of unknown long-range implications to our present difficulties with alcohol may be the subject of profitable discussion. Another topic which might stimulate good discussions among intelligent youngsters and their teachers is the problem of allowing a harmful drug to become popular and then subsequently making it illegal. It might also be productive to discuss some of the originally unsuspected deleterious effects of drugs, such as the birth defects resulting from use of Thalidomide.

Use drug education materials as a springboard to discussion.

Even good films, pamphlets and other materials need to be made personally relevant to students. This can usually be done best through discussion. As teachers skilled in classroom discussion are well aware, much of the art of effective discussion requires that the teacher be a thoughtful and responsive listener as well as a catalyst.

The arguments (often heated) of the student who advocates use of drugs deserve a hearing and, when appropriate, a considered rebuttal. Often a teenager's apparent conviction masks considerable uncertainty about the worth of his arguments which are frequently offered to test their validity and/or the honesty of the teacher. Summarily rejecting the advocate's points may alter his classroom verbal behavior but it is unlikely to change his thinking. The most probable result of an arbitrary "put down" will be to convince the youngster that adult objections to drug use are merely prejudices.

A student-run discussion on prevention of drug abuse may be even more effective. Teenagers are frequently far more responsive to the mores and values of their own group than they are to the values of the adult world. Former drug abusers can often be highly effective in communicating with a student group where they can "tell it like it is."

Use by teachers and parents of alcohol and tobacco is of more than casual interest to the teenagers. All too often this is the thrust of their argument in favor of marijuana. In addition, the problem of compulsive overeating can readily serve to illustrate the highly-persistent nature of habitual behavior despite strong rational grounds for change.

As adults, we can also serve to demonstrate that it is possible to live an involved, truly meaningful life without the use of chemical substances to add meaning or excitement. The adult who is himself "turned on" by life without recourse to drugs is one of the best advertisements for that type of life.

Alternatives to drug use:

Youngsters who find satisfaction in other activities are less likely to find regular use of drugs appealing. Aware of this, the teacher may open up for individual or classroom discussion, ways in which students are or can become involved in activities that have personal meaning for them.

Many young people, while attempting to appear blase or uninvolved, feel keenly the problems of our contemporary world; and opportunities for active involvement, such as work with a political party or a program for slum children, might be encouraged. While a strong interest in other activities may not deter a student from experimenting with drugs, he is less likely to adopt habitual drug use if he feels "turned on" by shared and constructive human experiences.

Adolescence is a lonely time for many youngsters. The teenager who is unable to find his place in some orthodox group sometimes turns to drug use as a means of finding a kind of group acceptance. The student who is isolated from others or having more than the usual difficulties in gaining acceptance will sometimes respond very well to a special interest shown by one of his teachers. Even when the teacher is unable to solve a problem, he may serve as a necessary bridge in helping the student get assistance from some specialized professional source. Particularly for the student with a poor home situation, a sympathetic teacher can provide a model of an understanding adult who has no need to escape into a state of drugged unreality.

Wherever possible, discussions of drug abuse should be integrated into the general curriculum rather than limited to a specific drug abuse unit or lecture.